



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

Internet address: <http://stats.bls.gov/ro3news.htm>

INFORMATION: Gerald Perrins
(215) 597-3282

PLS - 3800

FOR RELEASE:

MEDIA CONTACT: Alan Paisner
(215) 861-5600

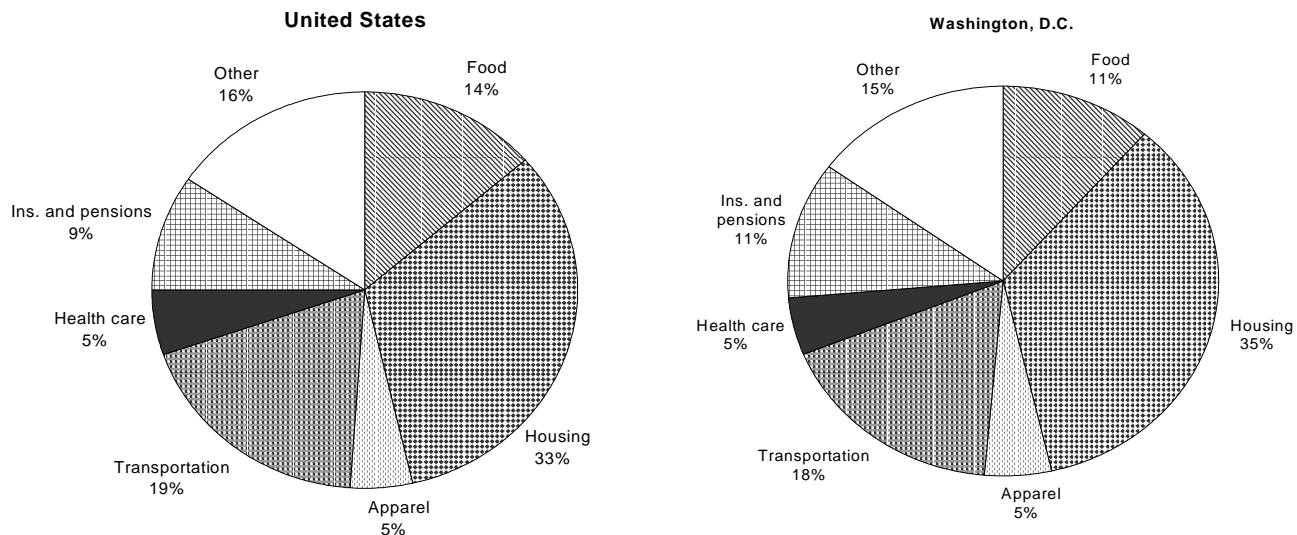
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CONSUMER EXPENDITURE SURVEY: WASHINGTON, D.C. METROPOLITAN AREA 1998-99

Consumer units¹ in the Washington, D.C., Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (PMSA) spent an average of \$46,797 per year in 1998-99, 29 percent more than the national average, according to the latest results from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Expenditure Survey. Washington area consumers spent 57 percent more on average for personal insurance and pensions and nearly 23 percent more for entertainment than did households nationwide. In addition, out-of-pocket expenses in Washington for health care, apparel and services, and cash contributions were among the highest for metropolitan areas in the South that were included in the survey. (See table 1; geographical boundaries of regions and areas referenced in this release are contained in the technical note.)

The average Washington household spent a slightly smaller share of its total budget for food, housing, and transportation (63.9 percent) than the average U.S. household (65.1 percent). (See table 2.) The percentage of Washington's budget spent on these three categories was also lower than in any other of the selected metropolitan areas in the South except Dallas-Fort Worth and Baltimore.

Chart A. Percent distribution of total average expenditures, United States and Washington, D.C. PMSA, 1998-99



"Other" includes alcoholic beverages, personal care, reading, education, tobacco & supplies, entertainment, miscellaneous goods and services, and cash contributions.

Note: Figures in this chart may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

¹ See the glossary for a definition of a consumer unit. The terms consumer unit and household are used interchangeably throughout the text for convenience.

This report contains annual data averaged over a two-year period--1998 and 1999. The data are from the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CEX), which is conducted on an ongoing basis by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The Bureau of the Census collects the survey data for BLS. The CEX is the only national survey that provides both complete data on household expenditures and the demographic characteristics of those households. Survey data cannot be used to make cost of living comparisons between areas. Expenditures vary among areas not only because of economic factors such as the price of goods and services and family income, but also because of differences such as the age of the population, climate, consumer tastes, family size, etc. The survey provides average expenditures for consumer units. An individual consumer unit may spend more or less than the average, depending on its particular characteristics.

On average, spending on housing accounted for 35 percent of total household expenditures in the Washington area. Elsewhere in the South, consumers in the Miami and Atlanta metropolitan areas spent a larger share of their budget on housing costs than did those in Washington, while households in Baltimore, Tampa, Houston, and Dallas-Fort Worth spent a smaller share. Nationally, households spent 32.7 percent on housing in the 1998-99 period. The majority of housing expenditures in Washington (63.9 percent) went for shelter, which includes mortgage interest, property taxes, repairs, and rent, among other items. Over 16 percent of total housing expenditures went for utilities, fuels and services. The expenditure share for shelter was higher than the national average, while the share for utilities, fuels, and services was lower. The rate of homeownership in Washington, at 64 percent, was about the same as the nationwide average of 65 percent.

Transportation was the second largest expenditure category in the Washington area, accounting for 17.5 percent of a household's budget compared to 18.8 percent for the Nation. Washington's proportion of expenditures for transportation was lower than any of the metropolitan areas in the South region except Baltimore. Of the \$8,171 annual expenditure on transportation in Washington, 90.8 percent was spent buying and maintaining private vehicles; the rest was spent on public transportation. Consumer units in Washington spent more on public transportation than any other area in the South region. The average number of vehicles per household in Washington was 1.9, the same as the national average. In the other Southern cities, the average number of vehicles ranged from 2.0 per household in Atlanta to 1.6 in Miami.

Washington consumers spent 11.4 percent of their budget on food, close to the share spent by households in Atlanta. All other metropolitan areas in the South spent well over 12 percent of their budgets on food. Washington households spent 54 percent of their food budget on food prepared and eaten at home, compared to 58 percent spent by households nationwide. The remaining 46 percent was spent on food prepared away from home, such as restaurant meals, carry-outs, board at school, and catered affairs.

Payments for personal insurance and pensions accounted for 11.4 percent of the typical Washington household budget, higher than the 9.4 percent share spent nationally. In the South region, only the Dallas-Fort Worth area spent a higher percentage on this category.

Spending on apparel and related services accounted for 4.9 percent of total expenditures in Washington. This was slightly above the 4.7 percent national average and higher than the share spent on clothing in the other Southern metropolitan areas in the survey except Dallas-Fort Worth.

Washington area consumers spent 4.8 percent of their budgets on entertainment, the highest proportion of the Southern metro areas in the survey except for Baltimore. Nationwide, households spent an average of 5.1 percent of their budget on entertainment.

Washington area households spent 4.7 percent of their household budget to cover out-of-pocket medical expenses--health insurance premiums, medical services, drugs (prescription and nonprescription), and medical supplies--similar to the share spent by households in Atlanta, Dallas-Fort Worth, and Houston. Nationwide, households spent an average of 5.3 percent of their budget on health care.

Cash contributions accounted for 2.9 percent of consumer spending in Washington, below the 3.2 percent national average. Only two metropolitan areas in the South had an expenditure share higher than that for the nation—Atlanta and Dallas-Forth Worth.

Regional spending:

The share of total expenditures within each of the major categories varied across regions though two, housing and transportation, did account for more than half of all spending in each of the four Census regions. (See table A.) Consumer units in the South spent both a smaller share (31.1 percent) and a lower dollar amount of their total expenditures on housing. Households in the Midwest followed closely behind, spending 31.7 percent of their total expenditures on housing. The Northeast registered the highest share of spending at 34.8 percent, followed by the West at 33.8 percent.

Transportation expenditures accounted for a larger share of total household spending in the South than in the other regions. Southern consumers allocated 20.3 percent of their household expenditures to transportation. The transportation share of total expenses represented 17.1 percent of total spending in the Northeast, 18.3 percent in the West, and 18.7 percent in the Midwest. In general, Southern and Midwestern consumer units had more similar spending habits, while households in the Northeast and West were closer in their expenditure choices.

Table A. Average expenditures and component shares for all consumer units by region of residence, 1998-99

	Northeast	Share of total	South	Share of total	Midwest	Share of total	West	Share of total
Average annual expenditures	\$37,971	100.0	\$33,147	100.0	\$35,369	100.0	\$40,662	100.0
Food	5,314	14.0	4,533	13.7	4,802	13.6	5,312	13.1
Food away from home	2,313	6.1	1,873	5.7	2,069	5.8	2,180	5.4
Housing	13,229	34.8	10,303	31.1	11,196	31.7	13,757	33.8
Shelter	8,149	21.5	5,467	16.5	6,270	17.7	8,516	20.9
Utilities, fuels, & public service	2,457	6.5	2,482	7.5	2,401	6.8	2,179	5.4
Transportation	6,503	17.1	6,738	20.3	6,617	18.7	7,423	18.3
Apparel and services	1,831	4.8	1,610	4.9	1,607	4.5	1,863	4.6
Health care	1,788	4.7	1,971	5.9	2,048	5.8	1,869	4.6
Personal insurance and pensions	3,461	9.1	3,048	9.2	3,355	9.5	3,990	9.8

Additional Data Available

A more detailed listing of CEX results can be obtained from the Bureau's fax-on-demand service in Philadelphia by dialing 215-597-4153 and accessing the document codes provided below. Additional CEX tables are also offered on the BLS Internet site <http://stats.bls.gov/csxhome.htm> in both text and PDF formats. For personal assistance or further information on the Consumer Expenditure Survey, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Philadelphia Information Office at 215-861-3282.

BLS Fax-on-Demand - Philadelphia (215) 597-4153	Number of pages	Document no.
Consumer Expenditures in 1999 - national news release (annual)	2	2705
CEX data -		
By quintiles of income before taxes (Table 1)	4	2710
By income before taxes (Table 2)	4	2715
By age of reference person (Table 3)	4	2720
By size of consumer unit (Table 4)	4	2725
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By number of earners (Table 6)	4	2735
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By region of residence (Table 8)	4	2745
By occupation of reference person (Table 9)	4	2750
By education of reference person (Table 10)	4	2760

Technical Note

The current Consumer Expenditure Survey program began in 1980. Its principal objective is to collect information on the buying habits of American consumers. The consumer expenditure data are used in a wide variety of research by government, business, labor, and academic analysts. The data are also required for periodic revision of the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The survey consists of two components: A Diary or recordkeeping survey completed by participating consumer units for two consecutive 1-week periods, and an Interview survey in which the expenditures of consumer units are obtained in five interviews conducted every 3 months. The data presented in this release are based on integrated data from both surveys.

The Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) covered by the Consumer Expenditure Survey represent areas designated by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget and are based on definitions in effect as of December 1992. Generally speaking, a MSA consists of one or more counties and meets specified size criteria—either it contains a city of at least 50,000 inhabitants, or it contains an urbanized area of at least 50,000 inhabitants, and has a total population of at least 100,000 (75,000 in New England). The largest MSAs are classified as Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA), loosely defined as metropolitan areas with a population of at least 1 million which have been divided into two or more sub-areas each having a population of at least 100,000 called Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas (PMSAs). (Due to a change in sampling frame and in area definitions, local data for the 1998-99 period are not directly comparable to data prior to 1996.) Definitions for metropolitan areas discussed in this release are listed under Geographic Boundaries.

Geographic Boundaries

Northeast Census Region: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

South Census Region: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Midwest Census Region: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

West Census Region: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV, CMSA:

Baltimore, MD, PMSA: Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard, and Queen Anne's Counties.

Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV, PMSA:

The District of Columbia;

Maryland: Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties;

Virginia: Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, and Stafford Counties, and Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park Cities;

West Virginia: Berkeley and Jefferson Counties.

Atlanta, GA, MSA: Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton Counties.

Geographic Boundaries: (continued)

Dallas-Fort Worth, TX, CMSA:

Dallas, TX, PMSA: Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Henderson, Hunt, Kaufman, and Rockwall Counties.

Fort Worth-Arlington, TX, PMSA: Hood, Johnson, Parker, and Tarrant Counties.

Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, TX, CMSA:

Brazoria, TX, PMSA: Brazoria County.

Galveston-Texas City, TX, PMSA: Galveston County.

Houston, TX, PMSA: Chambers, Fort Bend, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller Counties.

Miami-Fort Lauderdale, FL, CMSA:

Fort Lauderdale, FL, PMSA: Broward County.

Miami, FL, PMSA: Miami-Dade County.

Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL, MSA: Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas Counties.

Definitions

Consumer unit A single person living alone or sharing a household with others but who is financially independent; members of a household related by blood, marriage, adoption, or other legal arrangement; or two or more persons living together who share responsibility for at least 2 out of 3 major types of expenses - food, housing, and other expenses. The terms household or consumer unit are used interchangeably for convenience.

Complete income reporter In general, a consumer unit that provides values for at least one of the major sources of its income such as wages and salaries, self employment income, or Social Security income. Even complete income reporters may not have provided a full accounting of all income from all sources.

Table 1. Average annual expenditures and characteristics of all consumer units, U.S. average and selected Southern metropolitan statistical areas, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 1998-99

Item	United States Average	Washington, D.C.	Baltimore	Atlanta	Miami	Tampa	Dallas-Fort Worth	Houston
Income before taxes 1/	\$42,770	\$65,387	\$48,355	\$49,483	\$45,233	\$40,101	\$52,874	\$50,313
Age of reference person	47.8	46.5	48.7	45.6	49.2	50.8	44.6	44.8
Earners	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.5	1.5
Vehicles	1.9	1.9	1.7	2.0	1.6	1.7	1.9	1.9
Percent homeowner	65	64	66	68	64	70	59	56
Average annual expenditures	\$36,267	\$46,797	\$39,787	\$38,726	\$38,144	\$32,932	\$44,225	\$43,043
Food	4,921	5,358	5,165	4,449	4,791	4,750	6,490	5,624
Food at home	2,848	2,907	2,967	2,390	2,884	2,741	3,512	2,948
Cereals and bakery products	437	412	441	365	465	398	535	409
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	736	696	799	649	905	786	910	819
Dairy products	312	291	312	234	326	295	384	294
Fruits and vegetables	486	602	502	415	497	438	601	522
Other food at home	877	906	913	727	692	825	1,082	904
Food away from home	2,073	2,451	2,198	2,060	1,908	2,009	2,979	2,676
Alcoholic beverages	313	419	371	240	306	405	329	412
Housing	11,843	16,381	13,489	13,739	13,963	11,044	13,228	13,109
Shelter	6,850	10,472	8,169	8,136	8,443	6,258	7,358	7,167
Owned dwellings	4,386	6,501	5,756	5,397	5,380	3,836	4,394	4,123
Rented dwellings	2,002	3,052	1,784	2,230	2,744	1,873	2,662	2,572
Other lodging	461	920	629	508	319	550	302	471
Utilities, fuels and services	2,391	2,640	2,356	3,053	2,723	2,457	2,909	2,882
Household operations	606	815	606	793	1,017	639	798	762
Housekeeping supplies	490	473	661	340	407	449	538	489
Household furnishings	1,506	1,981	1,697	1,417	1,372	1,240	1,624	1,809
Apparel and services	1,708	2,279	1,660	1,712	1,734	1,330	2,492	1,950
Transportation	6,815	8,171	6,347	8,058	7,425	5,986	7,835	9,569
Vehicle purchases (net outlay)	3,136	3,914	2,801	3,814	2,840	2,602	3,687	5,039
Gasoline and motor oil	1,036	1,040	1,012	1,074	1,085	900	1,272	1,243
Other vehicle expenses	2,230	2,463	2,100	2,824	3,054	2,074	2,468	2,853
Public transportation	413	755	435	346	446	411	407	435
Health care	1,931	2,202	1,581	1,835	1,481	2,294	2,148	1,919
Entertainment	1,844	2,261	2,104	1,692	1,779	1,471	2,011	1,848
Personal care	405	640	462	343	408	292	528	537
Reading	160	244	129	177	88	118	163	130
Education	607	856	671	545	433	392	535	490
Tobacco	287	228	243	198	204	284	301	346
Miscellaneous	874	1,039	2,090	727	651	707	794	959
Cash contributions	1,150	1,366	1,122	1,488	1,066	834	2,251	1,390
Personal insurance and pensions	3,409	5,353	4,354	3,523	3,815	3,026	5,121	4,758

1/ Components of income and taxes are derived from "complete income reporters" only; see definitions.

Table 2. Distribution of expenditures, U.S. average and selected Southern metropolitan statistical areas, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 1998-99

Item	United States Average	Washington, D.C.	Baltimore	Atlanta	Miami	Tampa	Dallas-Fort Worth	Houston
Average annual expenditures	\$36,267	\$46,797	\$39,787	\$38,726	\$38,144	\$32,932	\$44,225	\$43,043
Percent distribution:	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Food	13.6	11.4	13.0	11.5	12.6	14.4	14.7	13.1
Food at home	7.9	6.2	7.5	6.2	7.6	8.3	7.9	6.8
Cereals and bakery products	1.2	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.0
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	2.0	1.5	2.0	1.7	2.4	2.4	2.1	1.9
Dairy products	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.7
Fruits and vegetables	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.2
Other food at home	2.4	1.9	2.3	1.9	1.8	2.5	2.4	2.1
Food away from home	5.7	5.2	5.5	5.3	5.0	6.1	6.7	6.2
Alcoholic beverages	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.8	1.2	0.7	1.0
Housing	32.7	35.0	33.9	35.5	36.6	33.5	29.9	30.5
Shelter	18.9	22.4	20.5	21.0	22.1	19.0	16.6	16.7
Owned dwellings	12.1	13.9	14.5	13.9	14.1	11.6	9.9	9.6
Rented dwellings	5.5	6.5	4.5	5.8	7.2	5.7	6.0	6.0
Other lodging	1.3	2.0	1.6	1.3	0.8	1.7	0.7	1.1
Utilities, fuels and services	6.6	5.6	5.9	7.9	7.1	7.5	6.6	6.7
Household operations	1.7	1.7	1.5	2.0	2.7	1.9	1.8	1.8
Housekeeping supplies	1.4	1.0	1.7	0.9	1.1	1.4	1.2	1.1
Household furnishings	4.2	4.2	4.3	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.7	4.2
Apparel and services	4.7	4.9	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.0	5.6	4.5
Transportation	18.8	17.5	16.0	20.8	19.5	18.2	17.7	22.2
Vehicle purchases (net outlay)	8.6	8.4	7.0	9.8	7.4	7.9	8.3	11.7
Gasoline and motor oil	2.9	2.2	2.5	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.9
Other vehicle expenses	6.1	5.3	5.3	7.3	8.0	6.3	5.6	6.6
Public transportation	1.1	1.6	1.1	0.9	1.2	1.2	0.9	1.0
Health care	5.3	4.7	4.0	4.7	3.9	7.0	4.9	4.5
Entertainment	5.1	4.8	5.3	4.4	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.3
Personal care	1.1	1.4	1.2	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.2	1.2
Reading	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.3
Education	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.1
Tobacco	0.8	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.7	0.8
Miscellaneous	2.4	2.2	5.3	1.9	1.7	2.1	1.8	2.2
Cash contributions	3.2	2.9	2.8	3.8	2.8	2.5	5.1	3.2
Personal insurance and pensions	9.4	11.4	10.9	9.1	10.0	9.2	11.6	11.1